

nets were needed, and the MCS2 terminal was shared, saving four radio nets overall.

By using the lightweight TACFIRE system and combining digital functions to eliminate one HMMWV, the integration did not substantially increase the TOC's size—only one HMMWV was added, joined to the TOC by a tent extension.

The problem of presenting a more lucrative target could not be overcome,

but this concern was far outweighed by the numerous advantages integration brought about.

In sum, integrating the direct support artillery TOC into the maneuver brigade TOC makes the coordination and synchronization of fire support simpler and easier and serves to build a cohesive combined arms team that is capable of truly synergistic action in warfighting.

As a result of this integration effort,

the other combat brigades in the 9th Infantry Division are now experimenting with the integration of their tactical operations centers.

Lieutenant Colonel James D. Crabbe commanded the 6th Battalion, 11th Field Artillery during the TOC integration. He is now assigned as the 9th Division's G-6. He has served as a battalion S-1, S-2, S-3, S-4, and executive officer, and commanded three times at the battery level. He holds a master's degree from Canisius College.

The One-Night TOC-EX

CAPTAIN STEVEN C. SIFERS

The personnel in a light infantry battalion tactical operations center (TOC) need to be trained to act as a close-knit and cohesive group. They must also be as well trained in the tactics and techniques of patrolling as any rifle squad. Becoming proficient in those tactics and techniques, of course, takes practice—lots of practice by everyone involved in the operation of the TOC.

Although it is not expected that TOC personnel will have to do the actual fighting on an objective that a rifle squad will have to do, an entire operation may hinge on their proficiency in the skills of movement, navigation, noise and light discipline, and camouflage, as well as the staff functions of planning and controlling.

There are many difficulties with training a light infantry TOC during the daily operations of a battalion, but I have found that three concerns are the most prominent—getting the “key players” (battalion commander, XO, S-3, command sergeant major, and others) to the training; keeping them away from their usual jobs for the shortest possible time; and sustaining the training.

At first glance it might appear that an ideal time to train TOC personnel would

be during a battalion field training exercise (FTX), with all the companies in the field. But this is often not the case—again because the key players need to be elsewhere doing other tasks. During an FTX, for example, the battalion commander, S-3, and XO need to evaluate the rifle company actions on the objective; the command sergeant major needs to be where he can inspire and motivate the soldiers; the S-2 is usually busy controlling the opposing force; the communications-electronics officer (CEO) is making sure the retransmission site is functioning; and the fire support officer and air liaison officer are conducting final coordinations for close air support.

To help solve these problems, the 2d Battalion, 75th Ranger Regiment at Fort Lewis uses three keys to TOC training: Stabilize TOC personnel, build them into a cohesive team, and train them during one-night TOC exercises (TOC-EXs).

In the past, the tendency has been to fill the TOC roster at the last moment with anyone who might be available. The battalion made the decision to fill by name the slots not assigned by specific duty position. These positions are mostly the radio-telephone operator (RTO)

positions, and an RTO now remains in that position until he is promoted out of it or leaves the battalion.

The 2d Battalion uses two TOCs in the field (designated simply TOC 1 and TOC 2). The headquarters company commander maintains the roster of personnel for TOC 1, and the battalion S-5 maintains the roster for TOC 2.

Another form of stabilization is in the configuration of the TOC for movement and patrol base occupation. The TOC is divided into three fire teams. Fire Teams A and B are the security elements, and Team C contains the command and control element. Team A moves in the lead with Team B in trail, and Team C moves in the middle (Figure 1).

In a perimeter grouping, Team A always has the 12 o'clock and 3 o'clock positions while Team B has the 6 o'clock and 9 o'clock positions. Team C occupies the middle of the perimeter (Figure 2).

The S-3 Air is the leader of Team A, the CEO is the leader of Team B, and the operations sergeant is the leader of Team C. Personnel positions within each team remain constant whether in a perimeter or moving in a wedge, in file, or on a road march. This makes it easier to

assimilate new personnel into the TOC, because everyone knows the position of everyone else.

Using established team-building techniques, we try to make each TOC and the personnel in that TOC feel they are a part of a unique organization within the company. Members of a TOC operate together whenever possible, even when their activities do not involve the command and control of the battalion, or when some of the key players are not present. They march together during road marches; they assemble together even on company jumps; every opportunity is taken to establish them as a cohesive group. (A friendly rivalry between the two TOCs has been going on for three years.)

The idea of training TOC personnel in one-night FTXs was born out of the need to have the staff officers available for the training. The time required is one afternoon and night. Done once a month in addition to normal deployments, this exercise gives the TOC personnel the needed training for standardization and proficiency. An exercise of this nature also provides the time for correcting any TOC deficiencies noted in past FTXs without involving the rest of the battalion.

The scenario for a TOC-EX is controlled by the HHC commander and is a combination of fieldcraft and staff functions. On the basis of the battalion's mission essential task list (METL) and the likely sequencing of missions, the HHC commander develops the plan and draws graphics for the operations sergeant. He then comes up with a time line for the afternoon and the night. This time line is flexible enough to allow for retraining, errors in navigation, and an after-action review at the conclusion of each phase.

The schedule need not be distributed to anyone in the TOC, but there is no need to keep it a secret either. Aside from the HHC commander, the only element that needs it is the one playing the three rifle companies in the exercise. In our case, we use the HHC XO as the companies. He has an RTO with a digital message device group (DMDG), the time schedule, and the regiment's tactical SOP, which contains the reporting format for our operations. The XO also carries a separate radio on which he and the HHC commander can talk about slowing

down or speeding up the schedule.

The one-night TOC-EX has proved valuable in keeping proficiency up and, at the same time, keeping to a minimum the time the staff is out of touch with the battalion. It is especially valuable in the areas of the standardization of packing lists, inspection procedures, movement techniques, occupation of patrol bases, and patrol base activities.

The following example, an exercise conducted by the battalion, illustrates in

more detail the way a one-night TOC-EX works.

The scenario for this particular operation involved the battalion conducting an airborne assault, a link-up with follow-on forces, a relief in place, a passage of lines, three company raids, and a road march. The operation involved an additional time constraint—since it was an airborne assault, we needed to conduct sustained airborne training (SAT). We used the morning PT hour for this training, though, since the night movement and the road march would be enough PT for the day.

Off-setting this time constraint was a time saver—a warning order was written the previous day. This gave the RTOs time to draw radios, conduct a communications exercise, review the communications electronics operation instructions, and memorize key call signs. It also gave the operations sergeant time to highlight operations schedules and to draw graphics on maps.

(These are all actions done in our normal deployment time schedule; since we were working on a very condensed planning sequence, early notice to certain personnel did not hinder the operation or deprive them of time they would normally get.)

The day began at 0630 with initial manifest call followed by the hour of SAT. The staff was then free for the rest of the morning to conduct staff business. The OPORD time was 1230, in the TOC 1 planning bay.

In a typical TOC-EX, the OPORD lasts about 30 minutes and focuses on items that are not in the SOP. The five-paragraph patrol order format is followed with emphasis on the enemy situation and the mission. The communications plan is discussed in detail and the escape and evasion routes are stressed. The final item in the order is usually a chalk talk that details movement formations, crossing danger areas, reaction to enemy contact, and occupation of a patrol base. This serves as a reminder for the old personnel and a brief description for the new. From the OPORD we move straight to final inspections.

Although we rehearse our actions during final inspections on normal deployments, on the one-night FTX we do not,

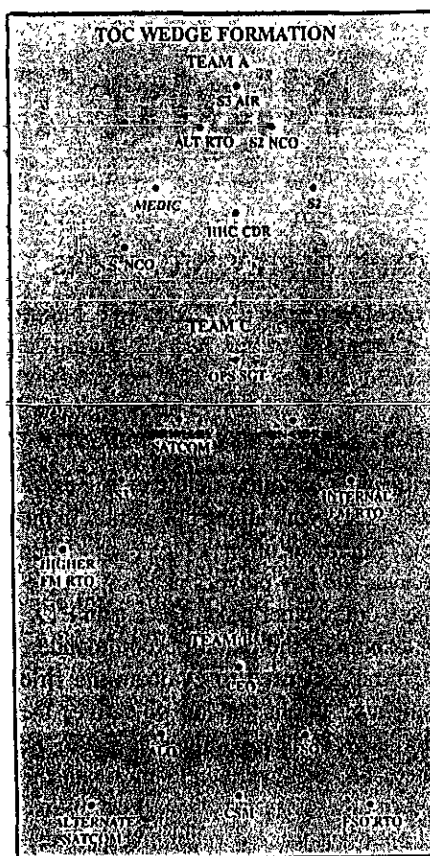


Figure 1

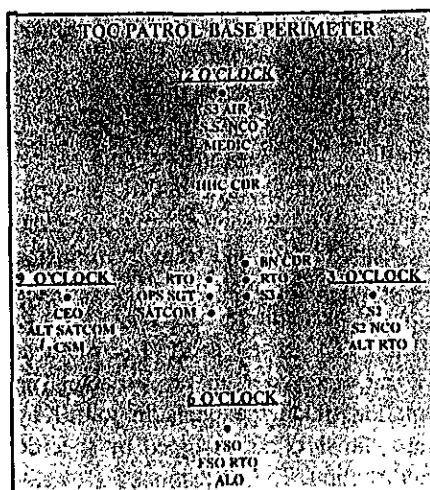


Figure 2

because there is time to do and redo them on the ground. The inspection procedures are standardized so that each leader knows exactly what he is looking for. The supply room is open at this time to issue any last-minute items that may have been forgotten. The final task at the inspection is cross leveling the battery load and rigging the rucksacks for the jump. From final inspection we move straight to the aircraft.

A TOC adheres to standard airborne time schedules; in this case, airborne station time, take-off time, and time on target were all met. Some critical actions are evaluated on the drop zone, especially the time it takes to establish the radio nets. Key leaders and the RTOs jump the radios and put them into operation immediately after placing the weapons in operation. Parachute recovery techniques, movement off the drop zone, and assembly time are evaluated as well. In this TOC-EX, the TOC was assembled in 43 minutes.

Even as the TOC assembled, reports were coming in, forcing the operations sergeant and the RTOs to record on the run. At the completion of the assembly, after the battalion commander received all the updated report information, we held our first AAR. One significant comment for future operations was that we should try to jump with one of the line companies next time. This would add some realism in the number of people running around on the drop zone. It would also add some confusion to the assembly plan because not everyone on the drop zone would be heading for the TOC 1 assembly area, thus making it a little more difficult to assemble.

By the conclusion of the AAR darkness was falling, the airborne assault was complete, and we were ready to start the link-up. The TOC controlled the link-up and the relief in place and then began its own movement toward the passage lane. In this movement phase the soldiers learn a great deal in the area of fieldcraft and patrolling techniques.

The scenario portrayed the rifle companies as infiltrating to conduct three company raids. This gave the TOC time to do as much movement as needed to control the raids and to occupy and reoccupy a patrol base. This is where it be-

came evident to everyone in the TOC how important it is to practice during the hours of darkness. This scenario also allowed us a great deal of time in the patrol base to practice patrol base activities. (Soldiers can discuss what to do in a patrol base and calmly talk about the effects of darkness, rain, and cold while sitting in a well-lit building and think they are prepared for it. But nothing matches the actual conditions to raise the frustration level and set everyone's nerves on edge.)



During patrol base activities, some of the staff can be allowed to rest so they can conduct business throughout the next day with no decrease in their normal output. During the patrol base activities, the staff planned the return road march and put the plan on the DMDG for transmission to the companies at the end of their raids.

The raids ended, and the DMDG mes-

sage was sent. The TOC conducted a three-hour road march to the rear and returned in time to conduct an hour-long AAR, perform recovery maintenance, get a hot breakfast, and begin the day with the rest of the battalion.

The following comments made at the final AAR reflect the flavor of the lessons learned and relearned on an exercise of this nature:

- The battalion fire support officer can assist the S-3 during the passage of lines by providing the front line trace information and contact information from his forward observers.

- Near and far side rally points on the passage lane must be designed and disseminated.

- The patrol should always halt before changing directions at night.

- A listening halt for 15 minutes is needed after occupation of a patrol base.

- Key equipment needs to be designated for destruction or evacuation in the event the patrol base is compromised.

- Before darkness, all luminous tape, watches, and compasses need to be illuminated by a flashlight so they will remain visible during the night.

- Expedients should be developed to be used for quietly erecting antennas, especially in the case of the field expedient RC-292 antenna.

These comments drawn from a single one-night TOC-EX are not intended as TOC SOP items for other light infantry TOCs.

We have found that a one-night TOC-EX is a valuable, time saving training tool. It allows all key players to participate, reinforces TOC cohesion through shared experience, does not hinder day-to-day staff operations, allows for the practice of skills under adverse conditions, and keeps all TOC personnel current on SOPs. All of these things can help to insure TOC proficiency in the event of combat.

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